

U.S. Department of Education
2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 12MA5

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Mr. Sean Bevan

Official School Name: Westwood High School

School Mailing Address: 200 Nahatan Street
Westwood, MA 02090-2538

County: Norfolk State School Code Number*: 03350505

Telephone: (781) 326-7500 E-mail: sbevan@westwood.k12.ma.us

Fax: (781) 461-8561 Web site/URL: http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. John Antonucci Superintendent e-mail:
jantonucci@westwood.k12.ma.us

District Name: Westwood Public Schools District Phone: (781) 326-7500

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Brian Kelly

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12MA5

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

12MA5

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 (per district designation): 1 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
7 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 13814

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	126	132	258
3	0	0	0		10	98	121	219
4	0	0	0		11	102	118	220
5	0	0	0		12	110	112	222
Total in Applying School:								919

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
5 % Asian
3 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
89 % White
1 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 1%
 This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	3
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	7
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	873
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.01
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 1%
 Total number of ELL students in the school: 5
 Number of non-English languages represented: 4
 Specify non-English languages:

Spanish, Cape Verdean, Chinese, and Albanian languages are spoken.

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5%

Total number of students who qualify: 43

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 14%

Total number of students served: 131

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>6</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>35</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>46</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>6</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>31</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>3</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>60</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>34</u>	<u>18</u>
Total number	<u>124</u>	<u>19</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 16:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	98%	98%	99%	97%	98%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>225</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>95%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>2%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>1%</u>
Found employment	<u>1%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>1%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

Westwood High School serves the community of Westwood, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. By any measure, the student population is high-achieving: the graduation rate is 98%, with 93% of Westwood High School students attending a four-year college or university upon graduation. The school serves 920 students, including 23 students who are enrolled in the METCO program, which affords Boston students a high-performing school outside of their Boston neighborhood. The staff is comprised of 72 faculty members, who are supported by 20 instructional assistants and other support staff. The administrative leadership team consists of the Principal, the Assistant Principal, and the Dean of Students.

Westwood High School offers an exceptional academic experience focused on equipping students to be college- and career-ready. In order to graduate, students must complete 115 credits, including four years of English, three years of both Math and Science, two years of both Social Studies and a Foreign Language, one year of both Fine Arts and Wellness.

The school's mission statement is: *Members of the Westwood High School community will strive for excellence in academic endeavors. We recognize that fostering a climate that promotes intellectual, social and emotional growth is the shared responsibility of students, faculty, administrators, support staff, parents, and the community-at-large. We challenge all members of our school community to practice self-discipline, exhibit respectful behavior, celebrate others' achievements and demonstrate a commitment to learning as a lifelong process.*

A striking and critical component of the mission statement above is the overarching philosophy that student growth is the shared responsibility of the student and the school community, including staff, families, and community members. The statement is a lyrical and meaningful encapsulation of the philosophy that pervades all elements of school life and is perhaps best reflected in the school's governing structure: based on a school Constitution, the school is governed by same three-branch structure that governs the United States. The Legislative Council, which consists of students and adults (teachers, support staff, parents, and community members), reviews and revises handbook policies as necessary. The administration executes the policies. And, disagreements about the administration's execution of handbook policy are settled by the judicial branch, the Judicial Council, which is also comprised of students and adults.

Developed and refined over the course of more than two decades, the school's application of the democratic design has become very foundation of a school culture wherein students are given a great deal of representation in making key decisions. The structure illustrates for students the democratic process in action, providing them with an invaluable experience that can only come with authentic exposure to a truly democratic process.

The strengths of the design has been on display this school year, in fact, as student-legislators rewrote a flawed cell phone policy. After a year of hard work crafting the new policy, the group voted on the changes, proposed the changes to the principal who approved them, and the new policy became handbook policy immediately.

A worthwhile footnote to the cell phone legislation above illustrates the school community's investment in and commitment to this unique model: the original vote at Legislative Council (20-3) secured enough votes for the policy to virtually ensure its passage. That is, since the group had already secured a two-thirds majority supporting the new measure, a veto by the principal would have simply delayed the policy's passage. A veto would have sent the proposal back to the Council for an override vote, a vote that the Council would have won. Worth noting, however, since the principal had been a key contributor to the students' development of the new policy, the resulting legislation was appropriate, enforceable, and

realistic. As a final step before signing the legislation, the Principal worked collaboratively with student legislators to inform the student body of the particulars of the change.

The key to the success of this democratic process - one that indeed is weaved into the fabric of the school - is that it respects the good judgment of the student body, and it holds them to high standards of conduct. The result is a healthy, high-functioning school environment in which students are rewarded with various privileges for living up to the school community's high expectations, expectations that they (or the students that preceded them) established.

The culture of high expectations transcends the school's adoption of new handbook policy. It's more than simply new laws governing cell phones in the halls. These high expectations can be seen in countless arenas and are supported by a clear commitment to foster and maintain meaningful relationships between students and staff.

The climate and culture of Westwood High School is, frankly, difficult to capture in writing. It is perhaps best captured instead by one of the school's figureheads, a retired town resident and full-time substitute teacher, Jerry Cronin, who remarks frequently, "Every day, I see something here at Westwood High School that makes me wish I was a student here."

1. Assessment Results:

A. Westwood High School administers the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science beginning at the end of March to most students during their sophomore year. Students' scores fall into four categories: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Failing. According to state requirements, a student must achieve a score of 240 or higher on the Mathematics and ELA test in order to graduate (a score of 240 falls in the Proficient category.) Those students who achieve a Needs Improvement score in Mathematics or ELA must fulfill an additional state Educational Proficiency Plan in order to graduate. In science, students must achieve a score of 220 or higher (a score of 220 falls in the Needs Improvement category.) Westwood High School adheres to all state requirements in regards to testing and graduation. Almost all students take the regular MCAS tests, but one or two students each year are tested alternatively due to their disabilities. Students who fail the MCAS are given extra tutoring to help them pass the test and graduate. The high school's goal is to have all students achieve scores in the Proficient or Advanced category.

B. Since the signing of No Child Left Behind in 2002, Westwood High School has made adequate yearly progress (AYP) every year in both the general population and reported subgroups. Importantly, the number of students in the Failing or Needs Improvement category has dropped in the last five years, from 9 to 7 percent in mathematics and 7 to 5 percent in ELA. The decreasing number of students is due to the implementation of earlier interventions. The high school now looks closely at the MCAS scores of eighth graders and identifies students in need of additional supports. Those students are given extra tutoring and/or placed in additional reading and math courses. Consequently, they enter high school as ninth graders and receive almost two years of additional support in math and ELA before taking the standardized tests again.

In general, the percentage of students in either the Proficient or Advanced categories has remained fairly consistent over the last five years, with gains in the Advanced category. In 2007, only 67 percent of students achieved an Advanced score in math compared with 74 percent in 2011. In ELA, the number of Advanced students goes from 56 percent in 2007 to 62 percent in 2011. The higher percentages of Advanced students comes from curriculum changes in both math and English. For instance, math teachers regularly have students explain in written paragraphs the way they came to a solution. Such a skill is expected on the MCAS mathematics test and Westwood students are now prepared for such questions. Both math and English teachers weave former MCAS questions into their assessments to prepare their students for the type of questions asked. With all the preparation, sophomores enter MCAS with very little surprises and the gains in the Advanced status prove this.

In regards to subgroups, most subgroups at Westwood do not get reported because their groups contain less than ten students. The most reliably reported subgroup is the students with disability group, which has seen its scores improve over the last five years. In both ELA and math, the percentage of students with disabilities who achieve a score of Proficient or higher has increased over 15 percentage points.

Despite the improvement in the students with disabilities subgroup, the group's scores still lag behind the scores of all students. The special education department works hard to prepare their students to give them the greatest chance at success. In their Learning Centers, students are given specialized instruction per their unique disability. They are taught test-taking strategies and organizational tips such as using graphic organizers to help structure their writing. Special education teachers work one-on-one with students throughout the year to help improve their skills in their areas of difficulty. The special education department has also created a Reading I and Reading II class to help freshmen and sophomores who struggle with reading and writing. These students receive extra instruction to help improve their reading comprehension and written expression.

Students with disabilities are given additional testing support during the construction of their Individualized Education Plans. There, the student's team decides what testing accommodations would best support the student during MCAS. For instance, the student may need a separate testing environment or require the use of a calculator or graphic organizer. Students tested in a separate environment are tested in small groups and by an instructor who knows the students personally and can ensure the accommodations are used. Westwood High School works hard to improve the scores of all their students, and constantly revamps curriculum and programs to offer additional support.

2. Using Assessment Results:

A. When Massachusetts releases the MCAS scores in early fall, Westwood Public Schools devotes a great deal of time and effort into analyzing the results and identifying areas of concern. At the high school, the areas of science, math, and English are tested. Those departments, in particular, spend several department meetings analyzing the results. Prior to those department meetings, three teachers from both math and English meet for a day with Assistant Superintendent to analyze the MCAS results. The teachers bring the report back to their departments and discuss results and recommendations. The freshman and sophomore teachers use the recommendations to inform instruction. For instance this year, English teachers decided that Westwood students needed to improve in their written and oral summaries of passages. Math teachers saw particular weaknesses in multiple choice questions and resolved to include more multiple questions on assessments and in class instruction. By taking a close look at the results, math and English teachers formed concrete steps to improve instruction.

In an effort to encourage the collaboration that leads to improved instruction, the administrators build in common planning time into the teachers' schedules. This common time gives teachers consistent periods to meet with their colleagues and share or plan lessons, units, and common assessments. In these professional learning communities (PLCs), teachers are able to redesign their curriculum, lessons and instructional methods in order to address any trouble areas identified by the MCAS results. Before each school year, teachers and their department heads talk about goals and create their PLCs based on their discussions. The PLCs are formed to create strong teams where teachers feel supported and motivated by their colleagues. By then giving PLCs the chance to meet during the school day, teachers also get the necessary time to create change.

Besides teacher-created instructional changes, the high school has implemented several programmatic changes as well. Westwood High School typically has three levels of courses: honors, level two college prep and level three college prep. After seeing students continue to struggle on the biology MCAS, the administration combined level two and three into one class. By combining the levels, the consistency of challenging, high-quality instruction raised the lowest-performing students' scores. In math, the Math Plus course gives additional instruction to targeted students in their sophomore year to prepare them for the upcoming test. The students take the Math Plus course in addition to their regular math class to keep them progressing forward in the math curriculum. In English, teachers focus on giving students the skills that allow them to succeed as writers and readers in general, but these teachers keep in mind the need to prepare their students for the test as well. Like in math, an additional Reading class is also offered to freshman and sophomores who struggle with reading comprehension and writing. By making these systematic changes to the science, math and English courses, Westwood High School students' performance on MCAS has improved.

B. After receiving the MCAS scores and the NCLB report, the district, with the help of the high school administrators, begins to communicate the results to the public. A presentation is made before the school committee to address any successes and weaknesses revealed by the MCAS results. In that presentation, any high school-specific plans to improve student performance are revealed. School committee meetings are open to the public and video taped so the entire community knows the results and plans for improvement. The MCAS results, NCLB report, and school committee minutes are also posted online for the community to read. The high school NCLB report itself is sent to parents to inform them of student achievement. The transparency of information holds the high school accountable to enacting change and

maintaining its high scores.

Besides making MCAS results and the NCLB report available to parents, the high school also opens up the student information portal to parents. Using the portal, parents can keep track of their students' academic progress in their classes. They can monitor attendance, conduct, and grades. Parents are now less likely to be surprised by excessive tardiness or low grades. Together with the teacher and administration, parents can intervene earlier to help their child achieve greater academic success.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Westwood Public Schools is proud to be at the forefront of the state's efforts to improve teacher evaluation systems. In its third year of revision and refinement and based on the research of Kim Marshall and Charlotte Danielson, the current evaluation system has been requested and reviewed by dozens of other districts from Massachusetts and across the country, with many districts using the model as a starting point for improving their own systems. Westwood staff has presented the model at several forums in the state to audience including upper administrators and other educational leaders (i.e. principal, curriculum leaders, department head, etc.).

Westwood High school staff, which comprise the majority of teachers in the district as a whole, have been invaluable contributors to the new system, which is designed to improve teachers at all stages of mastery, rather than to identify the small minority of weak teachers. The committee that designed the system included five high school teachers and the Principal.

The district's evaluation system is not the only Westwood program that other district and schools seek to replicate: the district's department-by-department Curriculum review cycle has produced high-performing groups of teachers. One such group is the English department who rewrote their curriculum in 2010 to reflect the Common Core and its focus on literacy and skills attainment. The resulting curriculum has become something of a gold standard in the Commonwealth. Indeed, the department chair and his staff have presented the curriculum within the district and to other schools and workshops, most recently at The Education Cooperative (TEC) and at Framingham State University.

Many of the districts most interested in employing programs that have brought Westwood High School such success are those with whom the district already has a working relationship, through The Education Cooperative, a regional agency that links the high school with others in the area, allowing the sharing of resources. Westwood High School staff - including administrators and department heads - participate in TEC job-alike groups to provide one another with support and resources. Through these conversations, Westwood's best practices are shared and adopted by other districts. In turn, Westwood staff learns about considers innovative programs happening in nearby districts.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Westwood High School staff works hard to build and maintain strong relationships with its families and community. These relationships are fostered by several outlets, which combine to both inform the school community and to gain the perspective and valued input of the school community.

Parents and community members have numerous avenues to become involved in the life of the school:

- Site Council provides feedback to the Principal on the school improvement plan and typically completes one or two projects a year, such as creating a student advisory program.
- Legislative Council creates and/or rewrites student handbook policies. Like Site Council, parents and community members provide the Council with the valuable perspective of those outside the school who also have a significant vested interest in the healthy operation of the school.

- Informational parent forums and meetings to help parents to become better informed stakeholders in their child's education:
 - Curriculum Night and Parent-Teacher Conferences: Teachers and parents meet each of these nights to share important insights into the child's school performance.
 - Guidance Parent Talks: Guidance counselors offer frequent parent/community events on topics ranging from the college application process, financial aid for college-bound seniors, the transition for rising eighth graders, etc.

In an effort to communicate school news to all families - not just those who are able to participate in the groups and events listed above - the principal employs several strategies to keep all families informed:

- Social media: The principal uses Twitter (@WestwoodHS) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/WestwoodHighSchool) to make announcements and to break school news. Reaching, hundreds of followers - including students, parents, alumni, and news media - these outlets provide followers with a wide variety of information, from the mundane (i.e. news announcing a fan bus cancelation) to the profound (i.e. an announcement outlining the passage of new Handbook legislation, which took effect the following day).
- Principal's Newsletter: Distributed online to parents monthly, the Principal's Newsletter highlights classroom activities, student news, and other pertinent school information. Downloaded over 600 times each month, the newsletter is linked to the Principal's blog (notesfromtheprincipalsdesk.blogspot.com), which invites public feedback by the school community, especially parents.

The Principal's combined reliance on social media and more conventional newsletter-style communication - in concert with the school's programmatic structures - has resulted in a school community that is increasingly well-informed and equipped to best support their child's success.

1. Curriculum:

Westwood High School implements the curriculum of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks by addressing four key school-wide academic expectations: read effectively, communicate effectively, define, analyze, and solve problems, and access and interpret information from a variety of sources. By meeting these expectations, students attain the key skills that allow them to be successful in the future. Indeed, 95% of Westwood students go onto college and the rest enter careers, the service, or vocational-technical programs. Regardless of their path, students leave Westwood having taken challenging courses from a wide variety of curricula.

The curriculum at Westwood seeks to achieve the standards set by the Massachusetts frameworks and have begun to incorporate the Common Core. The key to Westwood students' success in achieving mastery of MA curriculum objectives lies in the school's commitment to offering distinctive courses, supported by a host of academic programs designed to optimize student achievement.

- **English Language Arts:** One unique requirement of Westwood graduates is their successful completion of Public Speaking. Through the course juniors learn the art of rhetoric in order to communicate effectively in front of an audience. The course demonstrates Westwood's understanding of importance of strong speaking skills for students' future endeavors.
- **Mathematics and Science:** The math and science departments work closely together by sharing staffing and developing courses that embrace both disciplines. The Engineering course is an illustration of the collaborative nature between the two departments incorporating the necessary math and science into the course. Projects include designing, building, and testing model bridges, programming robots, and using a three-dimensional printer to print and test object designs.
- **Social Studies:** The most popular senior elective is Psychology where students learn a variety of topics to gain an understanding on human behavior. A strong emphasis of the class is on discussion and experimentation. For instance, during the child development unit, students bring in younger siblings to observe their stage of development. Students also form and implement their own psychological experiments to observe human behavior.
- **Visual and Performing Arts:** Piano Lab is a course offered to students to start or to continue learning how to play the piano. Students are also introduced to basic music theory and concepts in music technology, allowing them to practice composing and recording original music. Students are individually graded on their progress, not on overall ability.
- **Foreign Language:** Besides Spanish and French, students can elect to take Latin where they learn not only the language, but gain an in-depth look at Greek and Roman culture and history. All language students also use a language lab, where they record themselves and talk to native speakers through Skype. Both the recordings and live conversations help cement the students' conversational skills.
- **Hybrid courses:** Westwood offers four hybrid courses: Anatomy and Physiology, Video Productions, Economics, and Perspectives in History. Students split the class between formal class time with the teacher and time to work independently on projects. The hybrids achieve the same learning objectives but additionally teach students time management and independence.

These unique parts to Westwood's curriculum, along with the other course offerings, all contain common elements to ensure student success and preparedness. Students regularly use Google documents in their classes in order to collaborate, share data, and edit each others' work. Through Google documents and other assignments, teachers stress literacy, the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively with their peers and adults, as well as problem solving. Westwood students are presented with challenging

situations that they must solve through research and analysis, whether it is in Computer Science, Graphic Design, or Legal Studies. Westwood's academic expectations envelop each course and leave our students prepared accordingly.

2. Reading/English:

Students at Westwood are required to take and pass four years of English. For the first three years, students take an English course where they read many different texts and improve on their reading and writing skills from the year before. Juniors and seniors have the option of taking an AP course in either Literature or Language. All juniors also take a public speaking course for semester. Senior year, students can choose from a variety of semester-long electives such as Creative Writing, Humanities, and African-American Literature.

In the past two years, the English language arts (ELA) curriculum has undergone a dramatic rewrite in order to align the curriculum and their instruction with the new Common Core and Massachusetts state frameworks. Besides alignment with the new frameworks, the curriculum is also completely aligned across all grades with the intent to build on skills. For example, students learn the language of grammar by making meaning and playing with the sentence patterns. The sense of play - and inventiveness - is key in learning. Students are now stronger writers and readers because they understand the reasons for using one sentence structure over another.

The department also disbanded their use of the old vocabulary books where students memorized and quickly forgot their vocabulary words. Now the words are derived from the collaborative effort of teachers and students, based on readings and discussions in class. The words have a greater relevance to the students, and the students' retention of those words has improved. The ELA curriculum has recently expanded its choice of content as well. Students now read a combination of non-fiction and fictional texts. Fictional books now include modern, global texts as well as traditional British and American authors. All of these changes reflect the Common Core's call for "An Integrated Model of Literacy"- students focus on literary skills and their application in a way that is relevant to their lives.

For students who struggle with writing or reading, Westwood has instituted several different supports. During the day, students can go to a Writing Lab staffed with an English teacher to get help with their writing or other ELA assignment. Students who struggle with reading are placed into a targeted reading class to improve their skills. The reading classes focus on ninth and tenth grade students and help bring students up to their grade level in terms of reading. Through the supports and curriculum changes, the English department strives to produce competent readers and writers.

3. Mathematics:

The Mathematics Department endeavors to provide the best mathematics education possible commensurate with the needs and abilities of each individual student. To this end, the mathematics department course offerings are adjusted each year to meet the students' needs and interests. In the past, course levels have been combined or split further in an effort to provide incoming classes with the best instruction possible. Westwood students need to take and pass three years of math in order to graduate. Math courses at Westwood are typical with the nation, beginning with Algebra I and ending with Calculus. Students can take AP Calculus their senior year, and both AB and BC Calculus are offered. Students can also take Statistics in their senior year. Additionally this year, two seniors are taking a Managing Your Money online course, which exposes them to real-life applications of math.

All mathematics courses offered attempt to develop procedures for logical reasoning, encourage creativity in problem solving, and develop awareness for the place of mathematics in society. The department strives to provide students with real-life applications for math in an effort to increase its relevance. In addition, all math courses stress precision in both written and oral communications, strong algebraic skills and data analysis and interpretation with and without the use of technology. In regards to technology,

besides using graphing calculators, the department uses Geometer's Sketchpad. The program teaches mathematics in a visual way through various mathematical manipulations. Westwood math teachers report that students engage more with the material and take increased ownership of their learning. Consequently, their retention increases and they do better. The department wants students to develop a positive attitude towards mathematics, in the hopes that they will further their mathematics education.

In order to maximize individual help for students struggling with their courses, Westwood High School has a Math Seminar room that is staffed throughout the day by a math teacher. Students may drop-by the Math Seminar room to receive additional math support. This resource is used routinely by a wide variety of students. In addition, students may be enrolled in "Math Plus," a course that provides additional math instruction to students whose eighth grade MCAS scores indicated that they need additional support. Like the reading class, classes are kept small (6-12 students) in order to provide focused, individualized instruction. Through these two programs, Westwood students have many opportunities for extra help and achieve success in the math curriculum offered.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Perhaps more than any other department the Special Education department and programmatic design relate best to the school's mission. The department employs a multi-faceted approach, combining traditional Learning Centers with innovative programming to meet the needs of students who struggle the most, and linking general educators with their special education colleagues to assure growth and opportunities for all students:

- Learning Centers (LC): Most students who have special educational needs are serviced by one of four Special Education Learning Centers, in small classes (6-8 students).
- FLEX: A fully-integrated alternative education program, FLEX addresses the needs of students who struggle to find success at school. In many cases, students' struggles are the result of obstacles that are inter-related and combine to present profound challenges to the student's success. The key to the success of the program is that it is founded on a partnership between Special and general Education: some of the (typically) 12-15 students struggle with disabilities and some do not. All, however, benefit from the model, which is based on collaboration among all staff, the use of data to track student growth (through an RTI approach), and creating engaging programs to appeal to resistant learners. The FLEX program includes:
 - Group Wellness: In place of conventional Wellness courses, FLEX students complete Group Wellness, which combines a group-therapy approach and conventional physical education. Led by a full-time child psychologist and supported by two Special Education teachers and an Instructional Assistant, Group Wellness allows struggling students to address the obstacles they face with the help of others who struggle similarly by creating a safe and supportive therapeutic environment.
 - Therapy dog: Perhaps the best-known member of the FLEX staff is Otis, a therapy dog who works in the FLEX program every day, all day. Trained specifically to meet the needs of fragile and at-risk youth, Otis provides unconditional affection to FLEX students; in turn, FLEX students care for him as they would a family pet.
 - Experiential Learning: Another high-profile feature of the program is the 'boat build', a yearlong program through which FLEX students build a canoe by hand. Students take great pride in the result and in presenting achieving a significant goal through persistence and diligence.
 - Psychological support: the FLEX program is staffed by a full-time school psychologist, who provides therapeutic support to students with much greater frequency than they would be able to receive otherwise.

- FLEX Learning Center: a combination of the conventional LC design and the therapy-based FLEX approach, FLEX Learning Centers meet the unique needs of students who need greater support than traditional LC's can provide but whose needs are not as profound as those students needing the wraparound supports outlined above.

5. Instructional Methods:

Westwood High School practices Response To Intervention and so has developed a variety of structural methods/programs to provide diverse, personal learning opportunities and supports for its students.

- Course levels: Almost all courses are offered in three different levels: level three, level two, and honors with a possible advanced placement option. AP and honors courses move quickly, and students are expected to do more independent work. Level three courses cover the same material, but with scaffolding that allows the student to feel challenged but meet success. Level three courses regularly contain a teacher and an instructional aide to provide additional support.
- Inclusion: Special education students are included in all regular education courses. They then receive additional academic support in their Learning Centers.
- Academic Support Classes (ASC): ASC gives additional academic support to low-performing, non-special education students. The classes are staffed by an academic teacher and class sizes are small, from one to three students. These teachers help students organize and complete their work.
- METCO Tutoring: Students from the Boston area who enter Westwood through METCO (a state program designed to increase diversity and educational opportunities) are given additional tutoring to help them succeed academically.
- Post High School Transition Program: Some students with disabilities remain at Westwood until 22. Along with their academic courses at the high school, these students are given work internships outside of school to prepare them for the future.

Within each class, Westwood High School teachers use many different instructional methods to teach their curriculum, with a current focus on instructional technology.

- Google: Administrators, faculty, and students all have Google email addresses, which has increased the amount of online collaboration through Google documents and sites. Increasingly, students instruct themselves while the teachers facilitate/check for understanding.
- Flipped Classrooms: Some math and science teachers have used online instructional videos as a way to “flip” their classrooms: students watch the lesson at home and practice the lesson’s application with the teacher, allowing the teacher to spot any confusion.
- Chromebooks: Westwood is currently piloting the use of Google Chromebooks as a possible one-to-one solution. An English and Biology teacher have a class set of Chromebooks. While all teachers have access to mobile laptop carts, the one-to-one Chromebooks allow these two teachers to use instructional technology to provide differentiation.
- iPads: Students with severe disabilities have access to iPads throughout the day. Apps like Story Builder, Language Builder, and Conversation Builder give them prompts to help them use creative thinking skills to write stories, build sentences, and practice having conversations with others.

6. Professional Development:

Teachers’ professional development is strongly supported and encouraged by the Westwood administration and community. Twice a month, students are released early and teachers remain for two-

hours of professional development (PD) time. Teachers' PD time is spent in many different ways throughout the year and can depend on their professional status:

- All teachers spend PD time working toward district, school, department, and individualized objectives. This year's PD offerings focus on several distinct-yet-related initiatives:
 - Google apps: Adoption of web-based student and teacher tools
 - "Learning in a Networked World" seminar-style event: Reconsidering the role of the teacher in student's education, one wherein the student has greater independence leveraging the vast resources of the Internet, including social networking.
 - Common Core: the incorporation of the Common Core into the MA State Frameworks
 - Reflective Practice (RP): time during which staff customize their PD experience to explore an area of interest that will result in increased student engagement and achievement. This year's RP Projects include:
 - investigation of the use "Literacy Circles", where students investment in literature is self-guided and group-supported
 - data analysis of the results of common assessments
 - shifting to a "flipped classroom"
 - exploration of incorporating and granting credit for student employment opportunities, including internships in the community
 - Teachers new to the district are placed in Westwood's mentoring and induction program, a year-long seminar series that includes valuable and frequent opportunities for new teachers to visit others' classrooms and meet with their mentor. The support extends to second- and third-year teachers, who continue to work with a mentor and are provided with time during the school day to observe, conference and hone their craft. New teachers attend workshops facilitated by veteran teachers during some of the after school PD time, focusing on a variety of subjects to help new teachers (i.e. school culture, classroom management and instructional methods). The induction and mentoring program supports new teachers but also quickly orients them to the collaborative and collegial culture that exists at Westwood High School.

The combination of professional development opportunities above combine to offer many avenues for teachers to grow and to increase student achievement. The extensive time Westwood schools provision for the development of its professionals has many powerful and intended results. Most generally, the district attracts and retains highly-qualified professionals who are committed to student achievement and then supports them in their professional growth through a combination of broadly-applicable offerings and individualized time to achieve self-identified objectives.

7. School Leadership:

Perhaps the most exciting development of the 2011-2012 school year has been the creation of a new administrative position, the Dean of Students. Previously, Westwood High School's lean administrative structure - one principal and one assistant principal - prevented administrators from building and maintaining as many of the student-administrator relationships as they would have liked. The result was that many students' initial interactions with administrators were in the realm of discipline or some other unfortunate circumstance. The creation of the Dean of Students position, which took effect in September 2011, changed fundamentally how students and school administrators interact.

In an effort to retain the small-school, student-centered feel that serves students best, and in an attempt to leverage the creation of the Dean of Students position, the principal made several organizational changes that have resulted in many positive changes:

- Class-specific corridors: Student locker and homeroom assignments, which were previously assigned randomly, were reorganized to create class-specific corridors which house the lockers and homerooms for each grade for four years.
- Class-specific administration: For the first time ever, students in each class are assigned to an administrator, an individual whose office is positioned on their two-class, two-corridor floor. This administration-by-proximity approach allows the administrators to build relationships with students in advance of (or, sometimes, preventing) discipline issues or some other unfortunate circumstances.

The organizational arrangement outlined above enables administrators to align their efforts with the principal's (and school's) philosophy: the key to building a successful school culture is by cultivating and supporting strong relationships between students and teachers, providing a foundation that is based on mutual respect and accountability.

The changes have produced measurable gains in student achievement. The number of incidences where students received D's or F's by the midyear fell by 37% from last year to this year. Student conduct referrals are fell by two-thirds from an average of 13 referrals a day to 5. Additionally, the severity of the discipline has decreased with suspensions down by two-thirds from last year to this year.

The data shows clear increases in student achievement and decreases in conduct issues and severity. What it does not show are other changes that are high-impact improvements whose effects may be more difficult to capture through data. For example, all 919 students' report cards were reviewed personally by one of three administrators (Principal, Assistant Principal, or Dean of Students). In each case, the administrator wrote a personalized note on the report card, praising improvements over the previous quarter or remarking encouragingly to students who struggled. The focus on building relationships and community has created an environment where students feel supported and as a result, succeed.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 10

Test: Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Edition/Publication Year: Spring
2011/Spring 2010/Spring 2009/Spring
2008/Spring 2007

Publisher: Massachusetts Department of
Education/Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient Plus Advanced	93	93	94	93	91
Advanced	74	76	79	74	67
Number of students tested	228	226	208	202	218
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced					72
Advanced					36
Number of students tested	8	6	5	7	11
2. African American Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	100				80
Advanced	30				20
Number of students tested	10	5	8	8	10
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	4	5	4	3	4
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	70	72	71	73	54
Advanced	30	43	32	23	24
Number of students tested	40	35	38	30	33
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	3	0	2	1	0
6. Asian					
Proficient Plus Advanced	100	94		100	
Advanced	100	87		93	
Number of students tested	13	15	8	14	9
NOTES: Massachusetts' state policy prohibits the publication of test results for groups of 9 or less.					

12MA5

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 10 Test: Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Edition/Publication Year: Spring
2011/Spring 2010/Spring 2009/Spring
2008/Spring 2007

Publisher: Massachusetts Department of
Education/Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient Plus Advanced	96	94	95	94	94
Advanced	62	46	56	55	56
Number of students tested	227	229	211	203	217
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced					91
Advanced					27
Number of students tested	8	7	5	8	11
2. African American Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	100				90
Advanced	20				20
Number of students tested	10	5	8	8	10
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	4	5	4	3	4
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	79	72	75	71	63
Advanced	23	11	21	13	13
Number of students tested	39	36	39	31	32
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	3	0	2	1	0
6. Asian					
Proficient Plus Advanced	100	93		100	
Advanced	77	60		86	
Number of students tested	13	15	9	14	9
NOTES:					
Massachusetts' state policy prohibits the publication of test results for groups of 9 or less.					

12MA5

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient Plus Advanced	93	93	94	93	91
Advanced	74	76	79	74	67
Number of students tested	228	226	208	202	218
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	72
Advanced	0	0	0	0	36
Number of students tested	8	6	5	7	11
2. African American Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	100	0	0	0	80
Advanced	30	0	0	0	20
Number of students tested	10	5	8	8	10
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	4	5	4	3	4
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	70	72	71	73	54
Advanced	30	43	32	23	24
Number of students tested	40	35	38	30	33
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	3	0	2	1	0
6. Asian					
Proficient Plus Advanced	100	94	0	100	0
Advanced	100	87	0	93	0
Number of students tested	13	15	8	14	9
NOTES:					
Massachusetts's state policy prohibits the publication of test results for groups of 9 or less.					

12MA5

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient Plus Advanced	96	94	95	94	94
Advanced	62	46	56	55	56
Number of students tested	227	229	211	203	217
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	1	1	0	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	91
Advanced	0	0	0	0	27
Number of students tested	8	7	5	8	11
2. African American Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	100	0	0	0	90
Advanced	20	0	0	0	20
Number of students tested	10	5	8	8	10
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	4	5	4	3	4
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	79	72	75	71	63
Advanced	23	11	21	13	13
Number of students tested	39	36	39	31	32
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient Plus Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	3	0	2	1	0
6. Asian					
Proficient Plus Advanced	100	93	0	100	0
Advanced	77	60	0	86	0
Number of students tested	13	15	9	14	9
NOTES:					
Massachusetts & rsquo state policy prohibits the publication of test results for groups of 9 or less.					

12MA5